

# Manipulation

\$1

February '81



a magazine for puppeteers and the like.

## processional puppets at the tuesday night club

The Tuesday Night Club is a group concerned with the promotion of recreational activities for the Intellectually Handicapped in the Western Region of Sydney. I have been working with the group under the Technical and Further Education programme run by Blacktown Tech, a programme known as Outreach. My brief was to use puppetry to help integrate these people into the community at large.

Not having had much experience with I.H. people, at first the task seemed enormous. I gave a series of simple puppet workshops, making small rod puppets and foam puppets, and started to find our limitations and strengths through experimental work, removing obstacles and barriers as they arose. I found a core group of 10 to 15 from the club membership of 200, and we embarked on the construction of large street puppets for the Holroyd Family Festival.

We started the project with high spirits. I found myself only accepting a high standard of work, and my group threw themselves into it with a degree of energy I've never experienced with so-called 'normal' people. Layers of papier mache transformed large cardboard boxes into surreal faces, many hands smoothing the features and painting. Sheets of black plastic were painstakingly covered with reverse garbage offcuts, and the heads mounted on long rods.

The final construction and rehearsal was completed with the whole group participating. A local rock band provided the rhythm while the puppeteers danced the puppets round the hall. A task had been completed and a great deal of satisfaction and pride gained in the construction.

The festival parade day arrived and a float was constructed by community volunteers. A very large puppet formed the figure-head of the float, its expanding arm waving to the crowd. The float, carrying members unable to walk the distance, bristled with rod puppets. Members using the foam puppets distributed handbills along the route, and leading the colourful bunch the processional puppets danced and whirled to the music of a pipe band. A large dragon puppet brought up the rear.

The exercise proved that puppetry can be used successfully with intellectually handicapped people as a means of integration. The puppets gave the members the necessary space to relate to the public, they were a catalyst for integration and acceptance. Most of the performers have great difficulty making themselves understood verbally (although with a little bit of effort on 'normal' people's part communication is possible) but through movement and colour their expression can be understood.

The puppet provides the motivation for development of finer motor skills than demanded by everyday living, and the cue to speech - giving the puppet a voice - is a very big challenge for people who often choose not to use verbal language. But mostly the puppet provides a means of adding colour and life to an otherwise bleak existence in wards and institutions, and the performance is a tangible goal to be reached. I have found these observations borne out in similar work I have done at Rydalmere Hospital.

During 1981 (International Year of the Disabled Person) it is hoped that the group will link with the Connexion 81 group to perform a very large piece in Hyde Park, using puppets, mask and mime. Anyone interested in investigating working with handicapped people and assisting the Tuesday Night Club with future projects, please contact me care of P.O. Box 86, Wentworth Building, Sydney University. Some funding is now available to individuals, and more funding is presently being sought.

CHRISTINE WOODCOCK

## unima news

(Reprinted with kind permission from the British UNIMA Bulletin.)

### INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY INSTITUTE

An important milestone in the development of puppetry, an International Institute has been established in Charleville-Mezières, in the north of France. The first stage opens this year. It will provide a permanent training and research centre for all aspects of puppetry, and will contain a Library, Museum and Exhibition Galleries, Research Centre, Film and Video Library. It will also publish material on all aspects, and there will be a small theatre.

During the past 50 years of existence of UNIMA, there has been a great deal of important documentation acquired. It is now felt that these records and information should be brought together in one place, for the purpose of study and research, etc. At the moment the records exist in three places: in the Museum of Puppetry in Chrudim, Czechoslovakia; in the various offices of Dr. Malik; and in the office of Henryk Jurkowski, in Poland. All of the records will be brought together in the International Institute.

The Institute requested the help of UNIMA in establishing a training situation. The Commission for Training led by Margareta Niculescu was given responsibility to look at the general problems and make recommendations. The first international course, lasting three months, will start this year. The course will be led by a team of Masters from the ranks of the most experienced and outstanding personalities of the world's puppet theatre. There will be places for 15 students, who must have some previous experience. This will be a pilot scheme, and inevitably there are many important issues to be discussed - finance, the structure and organization of courses, the preservation and development of standards, etc.

### PUBLICATIONS

The long awaited 50th Anniversary publication, "INTERNATIONAL PUPPET THEATRE" is now available. 3,000 copies, in two languages, English and German. Price, DM.28.

"FIGUR UND SPIEL" the second volume of important photographs and other material from all over the world has just been issued in a second printing. The first printing of some 6,000 copies sold out very quickly, a further 8,000 copies have been printed. Unfortunately, like the previous issue, it is in the German language .... it has so far been impossible to secure a contract for an English language edition. In 1984 a third volume will appear. This volume will have a theme - Puppets as a Medium. There will be a number of headings, for example: Music Theatre, Variety and Cabaret, Political Propaganda, Diagnostics and Therapy, Religion, Film, Television and Commercials, Folk and Living Traditions, Creative Puppet Play, and Puppets in the Actors Theatre. Photographs illustrating these themes will be introduced by written material prepared by notable authorities on the subject matter. We are now seeking material for this new volume.

### SUBJECTS FOR THE ILLUSTRATED CALENDAR

Subjects chosen by the Publications Commission of UNIMA are as follows:

- 1982 - Shadow Play
- 1983 - Popular Tales and Classical Fairy Tales for the Puppet Stage
- 1984 - Puppet Acts in Variety Programmes
- 1985 - Children Performing Puppet Plays for Children
- 1986 - Puppets Used in Cult and Traditional Ceremonies

The material for these calendars is collected three years in advance. Material for the 1983 calendar has already been selected. The Shadow Play issue is already prepared.

# unima news

## TRAINING BURSARIES

There are a number of Bursaries available to UNIMA members: 2 in Hungary, 2 in Bulgaria, 2 in France, and these are for a period of three months; there is one in Sweden for a period of one year; there are also 3 new six-week sessions in Prague.

Applications for these bursaries must be made to the National UNIMA Centres, an application form has then to be completed, and these are submitted to the UNIMA Training Commission for consideration. It is important that the applicant provides adequate information about levels of experience, etc. In the past a number of these bursaries have been awarded to students from Third World countries, in support of the work of the UNIMA Third World Commission.

There are great differences in the methods used for training the puppeteer all over the world. There are also differences in the needs and levels of experience of puppeteers, as well as differences of application in differing situations. These problems are to be discussed at a meeting of the UNIMA Training Commission with people concerned with training, prior to the commencement of the first course at the new International Institute. The agenda for this evening will be prepared by Jan Dvorak, director of theatre DRAK.

Like other UNIMA Commissions, the work and efforts are made less effective due to the shortage of money. There is a small sum of money in a Swiss Bank account earmarked for the work of the Commission; this is to be transferred to France. At the Washington Congress the sum of A\$ 600 was collected to supplement the training fund.

JOHN BLUNDALL

## Addresses

Chairperson Australian UNIMA Centre: Norman Hetherington, 18 Sirius Cove Road, MOSMAN, NSW, 2088.

Chairperson British UNIMA Centre: John Blundall, The Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, BIRMINGHAM 12 UNITED KINGDOM. Tel. 021 440 4221.

Suppliers for UNIMA publications "Figur und Spiel", "International Puppet Theatre" and calendar:-

Colletts Bookshop, Charing Cross Road, London, UK.

Puppen und Masken, Eppsteinerstrasse 22,  
6000 Frankfurt am Main  
GERMANY. (their catalogue is  
worth a look at)

Christine Woodcock and Jacqui Fine have received a script development grant from the Women's Film Fund. Work has now started on research into Edith's work and the formative years of Australian puppetry. The documentary will encompass many aspects of the art and incorporate the work of many Australian puppeteers.

Christine Woodcock, tutor in puppetry at Sydney Uni Arts Workshop and former member of Handspan in Melbourne, is producing the documentary and providing the technical information needed to complete the work. Jacqui Fine, a graduate from the Film course at Swinburne Tech., and with several years' experience as a freelance filmmaker, is directing the movie.



At present the filmmakers are seeking further funding to complete the film. Various government departments have been approached. There is confidence that, with the new tax incentives created to stimulate the film industry, some finance will come from the private sector. It is hoped that the finished product will

be of sufficient importance to attract overseas release.

More than just a cult movie for puppeteers, this film will tell the extraordinary story of a woman committed to an art form and in many ways responsible for the renaissance it presently enjoys. The film will explore the motivation behind the puppeteer, and help to spread the information available on this ancient medium.

Further information, letters of support, donations or investment enquiries should be directed to:-

PO. Box 86, Wentworth Building,  
Sydney University, NSW, 2006

CHRISTINE WOODCOCK

# polyglot puppets

A performance of the Polyglot Puppets begins with this little song:

'And when you look around you, it becomes very plain  
That you, me, he, she are none of us the same;  
that you, me, he, she are all of us the same.'

It is the paradox of these two statements that epitomizes Polyglot. The theatre works in schools with children of up to twenty-seven different nationalities. These are Australian children, with different cultural backgrounds, speaking different languages, with different songs, stories, food and national dress. However, they all have the same need for love, self esteem and appreciation.

We aim to foster a climate of tolerance and understanding amongst all ethnic groups, to develop a dignified awareness of their social and cultural origins, and to promote security for migrant children within both cultures.

We perform in particular in schools where there are migrant children, but also in country schools with few migrant students, to assist the children in a greater understanding of other ethnic groups, and where necessary to break down the xenophobic attitude that too frequently prevails toward minority groups.

It is a unique theatre in that nine languages are incorporated in two shows. These can also be performed in English.

The theatre was established in 1978, with an Innovations Grant from the Schools Commission, with added assistance from the Australia Council and the Victorian Ministry for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

As well as "The Good Friend" and "Circus Star", the company now has a third programme in their repertoire, "Star Child Goes Bush".

This is the story of an itinerant Beekeeper who takes five children, who speak different languages, through the bush on a quest to see the bees dance. Their journey takes them through a rain forest, savannah, desert, mountains and beach. On their way they meet animals appropriate to each environment, who comment on various aspects of Conservation and Caring for our countryside.

The Gould League, the environmental branch of the Education Department of Victoria, is working with us on the preparation of an activities kit to accompany the show.

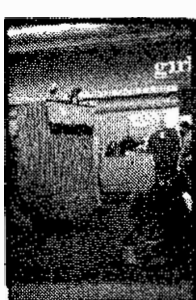
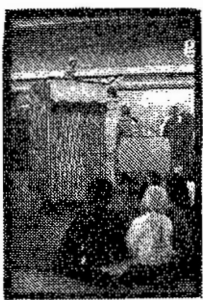
NAOMI TIPPETT

Address: Polyglot Puppet Theatre, 2 Denham Street,  
HAWTHORN, VICTORIA 3122.





# animate objects theatre



# Annie Heitman

Address: G.P.O. Box 397, Adelaide, 5001.

MANIPULATION

ANIMATE OBJECTS THEATRE IS THE COMPANY NAME  
THAT ANNIE HEITMAN USES FOR HER PRODUCTIONS



I've lived in Adelaide all my life. I started puppetry in 1975. Strictly speaking, I started when I was a child. My sister and I would charge our parents sixpence to watch our shows. She was too small to remember her lines, so I'd say them for her. Distinct disadvantage, working with someone who couldn't read the script.

In 1975 I went to the puppetry festival in Melbourne, and that was when I decided I wanted to be a puppeteer. I was working as a teacher at the time. I made a set of Punch and Judy puppets and started thinking about ways to earn my living. I got my first boost at the Adelaide Arts Festival, which is sometimes useful if you live here. I rang the Festival Centre and said I was a puppeteer and a clown, which was very bold, because I wasn't either yet. They had plenty of puppet shows that year, but they offered me a spot teaching kids to make puppets, and I took it.

I resigned from school soon after, and began to find gigs doing Punch and Judy. I never used a written script. I researched as many scripts as I could find, and just felt my way with each performance. I still work that way. Basically, it writes itself every show.

That's how I started, and I've spent my time since trying to improve my work. I've studied dance and mime, and went overseas to see what there was to be seen. Besides Punch and Judy, which has kept me alive, I've done four puppet pantomimes with other people. I guess one of my strengths is in being able to draw people together to make something. I want to learn more about directing, so I try to work up shows with other people whenever I can. I'm planning another show in August. I've booked Theatre 62 for a two-week season.

Working solo can get very frustrating, because you can't explore so many ideas.

Last year Winston Appleyard and I did Beckett's "Act Without Words". We limited ourselves with a puppet that was restricted in its movement. I'd like to do that show again, and work the puppet in a Bunraku style, have a more articulated and expressive puppet, and two or three manipulators. Or perhaps with a masked mime.

The business name used to be "Pocket People Puppet Theatre", which was a lovely name at first - the idea of people in your pocket and lots of nice 'P' sounds - but for Act Without Words we changed it. The name came from a song by Godley and Creme, called "I Pity Inanimate Objects". It's on the Freeze Frame album. 'Inanimate'

was hardly appropriate, so it became Animate Objects Theatre. It's a name with plenty of scope for playing with anything at all. The idea is that we are animating some objects, it doesn't matter so much what they are or what they look like, as the way they move.

In the future I'd like to create a mixed theatre, using masks and dance and mime with puppets. A total theatre with puppets as the foundation.

I'd like to work with abstract shapes, and with the puppeteer in view of the audience. I'd like also to do more street theatre, along the lines of Peter Schumann's work, but not the same. There have been some people in Adelaide doing direct ripoffs of his big white birds, and I don't think that's right - you must put your own energies into these things.

I get criticised a lot for doing Punch and Judy - it's violent, it's sexist. My argument is that Punch and Judy represents nothing more than itself. It's a folk tale, like footie is a folk entertainment. Children know that the violence is fantasy, everyone gets up after they've been knocked down, which is more than can be said for what happens on TV. The sexism is a little harder to defend, but I want to do the show in its traditional form. I think the fact that I earn my living as a Punch and Judy professor is a blow against sexism in itself.●

# ain't no way to rock and roll

Story by Suzy Winter

from an idea by Peter Seaborn

The toyota bus stopped. A colonial house on a beach front in middle suburbia seemed a strange place to hold a Bryan Ferry party. Columbine grabbed for the green make-up box. "The Pudding has arrived to entertain you," she thought, anticipating her first scotch.

Like players from a Fellini film they had each dressed for the occasion. Punch, who carried the bags of puppets, wore his tartan trousers and braces. The Captain had on his white Bowler Jacket. Harlequina had chosen pink shorts, black tights and thongs. Tatalia, perhaps with truer insight than any, wore her beautiful silk pantaloons with a simple black top. Harlequino wore his favourite collarless shirt. Columbina shivered inside her big screen-printed T shirt and looked down at her feet hidden in silver shoes, red socks and tights. Twelve midnight. If she didn't get a drink soon she'd fall asleep. Here we are, booked to perform by an unknown promoter in an unknown place at a party for the great Bryan Ferry and Roxy Music. Bizarre, she thought. Just bizarre.

The door was opened by the promoter, a soft-faced man with thinning black hair and wearing a green velour jumper over jeans. Columbine found herself being asked if she would like a drink by a tired blonde lady in a black and white Chinese silk dress.

"Scotch and Ice".

At last, she thought. Columbine surveyed the stage. It was sparse and bland, with a floor covering of beige broadloom. The walls were devoid of paintings. There was only one piece of furniture - a couch. On display were the party people. Women whom it seemed had been hand-picked for their beauty and fashion sense. Men admitted only in Gucci. Columbine drank and continued observing. Bryan Ferry hadn't arrived as yet, so there was no panic. She could separate from the troupe and enjoy the scotch and the food.

It was impossible not to be impressed by the food. Red-clothed tables extending the length of the room were feasted with baskets of breads, platters of cheeses, crayfish, whole cooked prawns, smoked salmon, pates, fresh figs and salads. Of course no one was seen actually eating it.

Two bored young women sat on the couch. Columbine, deciding to sample the conversation, was soon disappointed and drifted quickly back to the drinks. There she encountered a nuggety little Scot with one gold earring wearing a Mi-Sex T shirt. He looked like he should be playing soccer for Leeds. Addressing himself to her empty glass, he asked "What are you drinking?"

"Scotch," Columbine grinned, enjoying for the first time the extra role she was playing, realizing that if she wanted she could say anything she liked. She didn't want to - and neither did the guitarist for Roxy Music to whom she was talking. Facades removed, she found herself confessing to the problems of touring and to looking forward to getting home, and found in the guitarist someone who felt exactly the same. "It was all a game," thought Columbine as she watched him gesticulating through to the kitchen where more of the band were.

The puppets reacted indifferently to the Captain's hands as they reached for their very own Bill Barnacle. Bill breathed a sigh of relief to be free of the bag and away from the rest of the puppets at last. He sat with pride, listening as the Captain addressed himself to the party people. His beard curled with pleasure and pride.

Harlequina sat putting on a white face in the bedroom, undecided as to how best to entertain, now that Bryan had arrived! Harlequino, unaware of her dilemma, reached for his own Bunyip Bluegum. Like Bill, Bunyip was glad of the release. As proud as Bill he allowed himself to entertain the Roxy Music drummer - a tall American with a slight drawl. Harlequino also knew the language of music; it was to him that the drummer explained that the band would soon be breaking up. Bryan was seriously ill and couldn't continue to tour. "So this is as much wake as party", Harlequino realized.



Columbine knew nothing of this undercurrent as she reached gently for her Wombat. He looked at her glumly, his brow more furrowed than usual. She spoke to him in her softest voice.

"Come on, Bat of the Wom, it's time to meet and greet the people and do what we were asked to do."

Carefully, she took him to meet the drummer. Bunyip was there too, but he offered little support. Wombat cringed inwardly as he was passed thoughtlessly around to be felt and prodded. With relief he crept back to Columbine's hands.

"It's curious," Columbine had been thinking as she watched how the guitarist held Wombat, "good performers are eager to know and quick to appreciate talent in others." With the party people she had felt like she was demonstrating a wind-up toy.

From the corner of her eye she saw Bryan staring out at the dark ocean looking lonely and grim. Holding Wombat gently, she went up to him.

"I've brought my puppet to show you. I'd like to show him to you."

With polite interest, like a sad king who allows himself to be entertained, Bryan turned and saw only a young girl in a T shirt too big for her and a furry animal on her arm. She seemed only to confirm to him the distance between human beings. Once his face began to brighten as Columbine spoke of a song he used to sing, but she had the words wrong and his face grew worried again. Without

# letters

Dear Maeve ..... Thank you for the magazine. It is an important step in Australia. There is much of interest and influence to the puppeteer - it often has to be searched for, but it is there. You mention the need for foreign material, that it is also important to give some feeling that the puppet theatre exists in a world-wide context and not in isolation. Might I suggest you work closely with your UNIMA Centre, perhaps you might be fortunate enough to get the Chairman or Secretary to write or provide the material for a UNIMA page. Get puppeteers to expand their ideas and views in the magazine. Get other theatrical and artistic individuals from other disciplines to discuss the puppet, mask and creative theatre. It is important to create a balance between high-flown artistic ideals and ideas that are understood by the few, and more accessible ideas that the less experienced puppeteers can grasp.....the important thinking is along the lines of educating both the puppeteers and their audiences....too many mistakes are made by trying to be too clever. I notice that DRAC is to tour Australia. To me this is the finest creative theatre that exists. They have used tradition in the proper manner, and as a result produced a remarkable series of inspiring performances of great influence.

Through your magazine I would like to send much love and sincere wishes to all Australian puppeteers and particularly the many people that I had the pleasure of meeting and working with on the occasions that I have been in Australia....to you all, a very happy and successful 1981. Keep in touch, and I would love to hear from others as well.

JOHN BLUNDALL

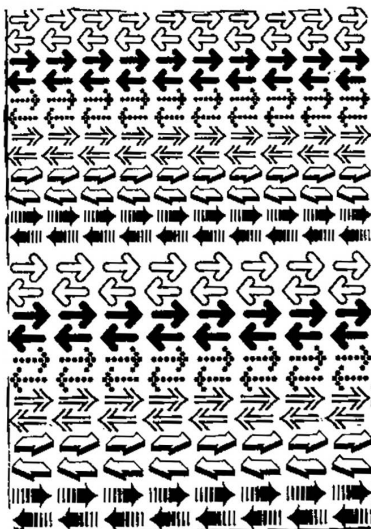
Dear Maeve ..... Congratulations on "Manipulation", very interesting, and I hope it will be very successful. Possible suggestion: the format is good for newspapers or once-only editions, but too large for interested people to keep and file, as most puppet magazines are kept as a reference. There is another way to print it and fold it differently and still have the large format - I'll show you when I see you.

AXEL AXELRAD

Axel, you're absolutely right. M.

## classified

Christine Woodcock would like to contact any past pupils and friends of EDITH MURRAY for interviews/ideas for the forthcoming documentary. Any information gratefully received, and clippings, photos, etc. will be returned after use or lodged with the relevant archive. Any early Australian puppetry news sought. P.O. Box 86, Wentworth Building, SYDNEY UNIVERSITY NSW 2006.



## next issue

PAPER BAG THEATRE

FAUST

LITTLE PATCH

FRANKFURTER PUPPENZENTRUM

MOMMA'S LITTLE HORROR SHOW

## ain't no way to rock'n'roll

thinking, she found herself saying to him, "Often when you reach the top, it's as tempting to fail as it is to go on succeeding".

As quickly as it had come, the moment passed, and she retreated through the glass doors.

"Bryan's gone !"

"Bryan's gone to Adrian's !"

Columbine and Tatalia watched sadly as Harlequino, Punch and the Captain improvised a mask play while the party people ignored them. The Captain was left strutting in empty air.

"We are as much an oddity to them as they are to us".

Doors banged and footsteps pattered to cars. Abandoning her role, Sue put Wombat back into the puppet bag, accepted the arm of a Gucci man to be whisked away to Adrian's in a yellow volkswagen. Kim remained, carefully filling a bag with prawns to take back to the motel.



MANIPULATION

## M.T.A. Puppet exhibition

The Marionette Theatre of Australia, our national puppet company and now in its 16th year, has recently taken possession of its first home - THE SYDNEY SAILORS' HOME in THE ROCKS.

An ambitious project is planned for the total conversion of the building into two puppet theatres, a puppetry workshop, exhibition space, offices and an outdoor performance area.

The cost is estimated at \$420,000. The M.T.A. is set the task of raising a high proportion of this cost from private sources. As an introduction to its fund-raising campaign, the M.T.A. has just mounted a puppetry exhibition at the Sailors' Home. Included in the exhibition will be puppets from various parts of the world, and puppets from the original Tintookies and various M.T.A. productions, like The Water Babies, The Magic Pudding, The Mysterious Potamus, Caprain Lazar and many more (all-time) favourites.

The exhibition was opened on Wednesday 4th February and will run until May 31st. Costs are 60¢ for adults and 40¢ for children, with concessions for large groups. Opening times are 11 till 4 on weekdays and 11 till 6 on weekends.



For further information, contact:

PHILIP ROLFE, administrator,  
Marionette Theatre of Australia,  
Sydney Sailors' Home,  
106-108 North George Street,  
THE ROCKS



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